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INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 0026
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0223
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0026
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0921
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON 0774
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA 0398
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 0138
RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO 0433
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DAKAR 000124

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STATE FOR INL/AAE, INR/AA, AF/W, AF/RSA, DRL/AE AND S/P
ACCRA FOR USAID/WA
LAGOS FOR DEA
PARIS FOR POL - D'ELIA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/17/2017

TAGS: SNAR PINS PINR PGOV PU

SUBJECT: C-AL6-01934: GUINEA-BISSAU RESEMBLES A NARCO-STATE

REF: 06 STATE 197044 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Charge Robert P. Jackson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) The narcotics situation in Guinea-Bissau probably now exceeds the government's ability to control without significant outside encouragement and support. Guinea-Bissau's most powerful public security units, including the military and sections of the police, have been co-opted by drug traffickers. There is no evidence linking the President or Prime Minister to narcotics trafficking, but according to a close advisor, they are afraid to take action against those involved, including the Chief of the Armed Forces and the Navy Chief. Those in the police or military who have not been corrupted do not take action because of threats to their life and lack of support. Former Prime Minister Carlos Domingos Gomes Junior remains at the UN compound in Bissau after expressing his concern about the situation spiraling out of control. The murder of the former Navy Chief may have been political or drug-related, but his death has created political and religious tensions that could make it even more difficult for the Government to address its narcotics problem. END SUMMARY.

NARCO-STATE

¶2. (C) The Prime Minister's advisor, Col. Aphonso Te (protect), was named to head up the anti-narcotics task force almost one year ago, but he is resigning out of frustration. On January 12, Te told PolOff he will be leaving government to work in the private sector in the coming weeks because he was never able to get funding to begin operations. Te also expressed frustration with the GOGB as a result of his efforts to intervene on behalf of a DEA Agent who visited Bissau in October to assist with prosecution of the largest drug bust in the country's history, 674 kg. of cocaine. The DEA was never granted access to the confiscated cocaine, which has since disappeared, or the prisoners, who were released without charge. The GOGB has still not officially responded to post's diplomatic note requesting access in that case.

¶3. (S) Te explained that Nigerians are at the center of drug

trafficking in Guinea-Bissau and are extremely well organized. There are lines that branch off of the Nigerians to approximately four or five gangs. Each of those gangs has a close affiliation with a government security unit. Te named Defense Minister Helder Proenca as the most corrupt and most dangerous of these. It was he who issued the death threat to Judicial Police Chief Da Silva after the latter made the bust and seizure of the 674 kg. of cocaine. Te also named Navy Chief Bubo Na Tchuto, former Interior Minister Ernesto Carvalho, former Navy Chief Admiral Lamine Sanha who was shot in his home and died on January 6; and perhaps most significantly, General Batista Tagme Na Waie, Chief of the Armed Forces. He did not specify which police officers he believes to be involved.

¶4. (C) Te said Tagme was involved with the case of the 674 kg. of cocaine according to his contacts in Conakry, Guinea. He has evidence that Tagme was involved in other operations as well, including one in late September in which a military air base was used and another in early November which involved military transport vehicles. When pressed on possible involvement of President Joao Bernardo & Nino Vieira and Prime Minister Aristides Gomes, Te said he believed neither man was involved. However, he noted that both are too afraid to take action.

¶5. (C) Te also noted the increasing problem of money laundering, check fraud, and 419 schemes taking place in Guinea-Bissau. Some, but not all, of these activities are directly related to drug trafficking.

SANHA, S MURDER

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¶6. (C) Te did not have information as to who was responsible for Admiral Sanha's murder or if it was motivated by politics or drugs. He noted that there have been struggles between drug gangs in Bissau that have resulted in violence and did not discount that possibility in this case.

¶7. (U) After Sanha died from gunshot wounds, Muslim protesters became violent and burned down two houses, one belonging to Vieira and the other belonging to Ibrahima Sow, an advisor to Vieira. The military intervened and one protester was shot and killed and several others were wounded. Carlos Domingos Gomes Junior, a former Prime Minister and leader of the Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC), was quoted in European press as blaming Vieira for Sanha's death. The Government responded by issuing an arrest warrant for Gomes Junior, even though he has immunity as a sitting parliamentarian. Gomes Junior fled to United Nations headquarters where he remains today while he and the GOGB negotiate over the wording of a statement of apology or explanation of his remarks.

COMMENT

¶8. (C) The narcotics situation in Guinea-Bissau has achieved very troubling proportions, probably exceeding the government's ability to control without significant outside encouragement and support. Vieira fired Interior Minister Carvalho on November 26 and replaced him with Dionisio Cabi, who is reputed to be interested in fighting drug trafficking. No reason was given for Carvalho's dismissal, though there was speculation at the time that it was because of his close links with former President Kumba Yala, who returned to Bissau in early November to assume the presidency of the Party for Social Renewal (PRS). Also, it was rumored that Vieira had Defense Minister Proenca under surveillance for his suspected involvement in drug trafficking, but surveillance has now stopped. These events lend credence to Te's assertion that Vieira is not involved and in fact may have been taking steps to limit drug activity. But if Proenca, Tagme, and Na Tchuto are indeed involved, any anti-narcotics effort will be merely for show. As long as

Tagme firmly controls the military, Vieira will not directly challenge him. The fact that the PAIGC and Muslims blame Vieira for Sanja's murder may also complicate Vieira's efforts to fight organized crime in Guinea-Bissau. END
COMMENT.
JACKSON